

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MASS ATROCITY CRIMES IN DARFUR AND THE RESPONSE OF GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN BROADCASTERS TO INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

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The Government of Sudan tightly controls the broadcast media in Sudan to limit domestic debate over policy in Darfur and southern Sudan. Since the broadcast media are by far the most accessible in a country with a literacy rate of only 61.1 percent, and since the Government of Sudan operates all Arabic radio and television stations, government censorship and disinformation pre-empt serious debate among Sudan's 41.2 million people.

This study examined and analyzed Government of Sudan domestic radio and television news broadcasts, as well as the web sites of Sudanese government news agencies, since the start of the Darfur crisis in 2003. Translations from Arabic to English were provided to the authors through a subscription to the BBC Monitoring Service.

We found that Government of Sudan radio and television news broadcasts, as well as sermons following Friday night prayers, consistently distorted events in Darfur and southern Sudan, and the international reaction to them. Moreover, Government of Sudan broadcasters withheld key information on the contents of peace agreements signed by the Government of Sudan. The pattern of these actions leads us to conclude that the Government of Sudan has no intention of implementing the Darfur peace accord and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for southern Sudan in the long run.

Seven key themes characterize Government of Sudan domestic broadcasts:

1. Sudan is a sovereign nation and UN involvement constitutes meddling in Sudan's internal affairs, eroding Sudan's sovereignty.
2. The Government of Sudan has the Darfur situation under control and does not need foreign help. It is dedicated to the peace process and progress is being made towards economic and social development in Darfur.
3. Foreign pressure on Sudan amounts to a hostile attack on the nation and a new form of recolonization.
4. United Nations interest in the Darfur crisis serves a Western-Zionist agenda, is part of foreign conspiracies directed against Sudan, and is not motivated by genuine humanitarian concerns.
5. The people of Sudan are opposed to UN intervention in their region and the solution to its problems lie in the hands of Darfur's people, who oppose foreign interference. Sudan will resist by force if necessary any efforts to station UN troops in Darfur.
6. The African Union is fully capable of fulfilling its responsibilities in the Darfur region without UN reinforcements and those who belittle the African Union's abilities do so from anti-African motives.
7. International attention to the Darfur crisis strengthens the bargaining position of the rebel groups and makes unlikely a lasting peace in the region.

Unprepared by Sudan's government controlled media for the loss of revenue which would accompany any seriously implemented sharing of oil revenues with the South and the West, and schooled by the Government media to regard southerners and Darfurians as fractious, disorganized, and backward interlopers in the serious work of governing Sudan, Arab northerners are ill prepared for accommodation with the southern and western regions of the country which contribute the bulk of its revenues. This is the surest indication that the Government of Sudan has no intention of living with its signed agreements pledging greater autonomy, revenue sharing and an integrated defence force to the leaders of dissident movements in the South and the West. The international community will ignore this evidence at its peril. The struggle of the people in southern and western Sudan for greater autonomy, a fair share of oil revenues, and security from attack has only just begun.